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NEWS RELEASE

April 4, 2005

Contact: Betsy Bach, interim dean, Davidson Honors College, (406) 243-2580.

UM CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

MISSOULA —

Some of The University of Montana's brightest minds will showcase their talents during the upcoming UM Conference on Undergraduate Research.

This fifth-annual UMCUR is titled "Frontiers in Undergraduate Scholarship." It will be held Friday, April 15, on the third floor of the University Center, with fine arts performances in the Music Building's recital hall. Events run from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and are free and open to the public.

"Participation has grown every year," said Betsy Bach, UMCUR director and interim dean of UM's Davidson Honors College. "We know undergraduate research is a wonderful way to promote student engagement in University science programs. It also allows our students to work more closely with our faculty members."

The keynote speaker during the event will be Diane Smith, author of "Letters From Yellowstone." She will speak at 12:10 p.m. in the University Center Theater.

"Letters From Yellowstone" is a warmhearted novel about naturalists and nature at the turn of the last century. The story -- which delves into perspectives on the nature of science -- is told entirely through correspondence.

Smith studied western and environmental history at UM and now specializes in science

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writing, with an emphasis on public understanding of science and the reform of science education. She also does travel writing, which often integrates her interests in history and the environment.

“Ms. Smith was selected because her work easily demonstrates the various forms that research and creativity can take,” Bach said.

The conference will offer oral sessions running from 9 a.m. to noon, 1 to 3 p.m. and 4 to 5 p.m. Students will have 15 minutes to discuss their research or academic project, with five minutes allowed for questions.

A poster session displaying student work starts at 3 p.m.

At the end of the day, judges will award \$100 gift certificates to the Bookstore at UM for the best entries in five areas: humanities, social sciences, fine arts, life sciences and physical sciences.

UMCUR will run concurrently with Rocky Mountain GeoDays, a conference of geology students from several regional universities who also will give oral and poster presentations. In addition, students from UM's Department of Health and Human Performance will present their research and recruit.

For more information on UMCUR, visit <http://www.umt.edu/ugresearch/>.

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